

TORA BORA TO ABBOTTABAD

THE NARRATIVE OF

OSAMA BIN LADEN'S SON

TRANSLATED BY
'ABD AR-RAHMAN AL-MANSUR



مؤسسة النازعات
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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‘al-Nāzi‘āt

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Preface

In an attempt to gather the scattered narratives and testimonies regarding Jihādī events, we have collected the three articles published as told by one of Osama bin Laden's sons on the *MAFA* website, owned by Mustafa Hamid Abu al-Walid al-Masri. In his introduction, he clarified the context of the narrative.

The exact identity of the narrator was not precisely clear to us, as two of bin Laden's sons were with him on this journey. It may be Omar bin Osama bin Laden, as he mentioned that he was with his father during their departure from Tora Bora in his interview with Ammar Taqi in *Al-Qabas*, or it could be a brother of his.

We have added some footnotes to further clarify certain incidents or names.

‘al-Nāzi‘āt

Publisher's Introduction

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

This story is told by one who lived it, not merely heard it. It is one of the sons of Osama bin Laden who accompanied him on his final journey inside Afghanistan, which extended from October 2001 until the spring of 2002. The entire journey took place under violent aerial bombardment and ground pursuits by spies and American forces, from Kabul to the mountains of Tora Bora, arriving at the province of Kunar, then the tribal areas in Pakistan, until the city of Peshawar.

In the context of the hadith, when I intervene for commentary or clarification, "the text is written between quotation marks and in italics"¹. I have placed dates to the best of my ability after reviewing the diaries of that war. Apart from that, it is what was spoken by the narrator who lived the story from his arrival with his father, Osama bin Laden, to Peshawar in Pakistan. From there, they separated, and each of them began a different direction, a journey of hiding and escaping from merciless, bloody pursuits.

As for the specific part regarding the assassination operation of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad at the hands of American Special Forces, he narrated it based on what he heard from family members who lived through that experience themselves.

The specific section regarding the meeting between bin Laden and the famous Afghan leader Hekmatyar sheds light on one aspect of that complex and ambiguous personality. It is known that this leader, who was famous for fundamentalism and violence in the era of the war with the Soviets, has now joined the care of the American

¹ We have placed that in the footnotes; all within its place. [‘al-Nāzi‘āt].

occupation in the Kabul government, calling on the Mujāhidīn to lay down their arms and engage in the service of the occupation under the umbrella of peace.

Hekmatyar's stance toward Osama bin Laden in Kunar and his stance now regarding the occupation in Kabul clarify a great deal for us and make us better understand the intricacies of his complex personality. Furthermore, we understand the significance of his rough and suspicious behavior with bin Laden during the difficult meeting—a matter that raised the doubts of bin Laden, as is clear in the story told by the one who lived its details.

We are, in this tour, guests of one of the sons of Osama bin Laden, who was perhaps the most similar of the sons to him, almost a miniature image of his father even in his speech, his silence, and his mannerisms.

He was with his father since he left Kandahar weeks before the event of September 11, 2001, until he crossed the mountain borders into Pakistan in the spring of 2002.

He sat with me at some time, in some place, remembering those difficult days we passed through quickly.

Abu al-Walid al-Masri

Mustafa Hamid

And among what he said were the following words:

From Kabul to Tora Bora

After my father—Usāmah bin Lādin—left Kandahar, he stayed for a time in the rear lines in the village of Kalakan north of Kabul. He would rest in the guesthouse of the rear lines. He also moved for a period between Kabul and the "Mays Aynak" camp on the outskirts of Logar province south of the capital. This lasted for several weeks.

He would also go to the Tora Bora mountains—on the outskirts of Jalalabad—to supervise the preparation of the positions being readied to meet the enemy.

On the day of the fall of Kabul (November 11, 2001), my father was there. He left the capital returning to Jalalabad, to be accompanied there by sincere friends from the old field commands such as Awal Gul, Dr. Amin, and from "Al-Qaeda" Abu Omar al-Maghribi, Muhammad Fahim, Hamza al-Ghamdi, and others.

On the day of the fall of Jalalabad (December 6, 2001), we left the city heading to Tora Bora. We rode in a 4WD bus, moving at night without lights. The driver was Hamza al-Ghamdi. The American aviation was bombing the city.

We parked the bus at the foot of the mountain and began the ascent on foot. After three hours, we reached the first Arab position, which was a group of guards, so we spent the night with them.

In the morning, and after having breakfast, we continued the mountain ascent continuously from sunrise until the time of Asr, until we reached the last position for the Arab youth.

We rested in the trenches under the trees, and with difficulty, we found food consisting of rice and potatoes.

My father suggested continuing the ascent. The snow was surrounding us, until the mountainous areas with Pakistan appeared to us. Our location was in a zone

separating two different tribes living on both sides of the border, and we were in the middle. The area belonged to the Martyr Engineer Mahmoud, from the group of Mawlawi Yunus Khalis. We stayed there for a week or less.

My father requested that we continue ascending the mountain with an Afghan guide, so we walked for about ten hours from Asr until Fajr. We prayed, then we reached the destination. Arrangements were underway with one of the two tribes to shelter my father. With him from the youth were about 30 people. Within the convoy were Dr. Ayman al-Zawāhirī, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, Abu Omar al-Maghribi, and Hamza al-Ghamdi. Two of his sons were with him; we accompanied him and assisted him in all his affairs.

We arrived at one of the villages before sunrise. We hurried to leave it before its people could sense us, causing news to leak. Finally, we arrived at an isolated house in the mountains where we slept until the afternoon, and our host prepared a lavish lunch for us.

In the middle of the night, the owners of the house brought a truck to carry us to the top of the mountain in their area, and we were extremely exhausted. Above the mountain, we found a house of two rooms that used to be used as a pen for sheep, so it was full of fleas. The youth called it "Bayt al-Kik" meaning fleas in the Pashto language.

I was filming my father without him noticing, as I had a camera with me that I carried throughout the time.

In one room, I was with father, and with us were Dr. Ayman and Sulaiman Abu Ghaith. My brother slept in the other room with the rest of the youth. We remained in that state for nearly a week. There were no Afghans with us.

At Fajr, the news reached us of the martyrdom of the wife of Dr. Ayman and his children², as well as the brothers Muhammad Salah and Abdul Hadi al-Jordani.

We were near the highest peak accessible in Tora Bora.

From the enemy's side, those who besieged Tora Bora were the men of Commanders [Haji] Zaman and Hazrat Ali³.

Commander Awal Gul—who was a friend of my father—joined Zaman "formally", according to a condition stipulated by my father, which was that he sends us the news of the hostile forces via the agent of liaison Muhammad Fahim⁴.

² We were in Tora Bora, and after I had performed the dawn (Fajr) prayer and we sat for the post-prayer remembrances, I noticed the brothers leaving one by one from the place where we were, until I was left sitting alone in the place.

Then this brother — the bearer of the news — entered, greeted me, offered his condolences, and reminded me to be patient and to seek reward [from God]. He informed me that my wife had been killed, that my son had been killed, and that my daughter had been killed. He also told me that my three brothers had been killed, and that members of their families had been killed, and that their sons and daughters had been killed.

So I pronounced the words of return to God and sought reward, and I asked God Almighty to grant me strength. Then the Sheikh [bin Laden] entered, embraced me, with tears in his eyes and sobbing constricting his voice, and he offered his condolences. After that, the brothers entered one by one, consoling me, encouraging me to be patient, and strengthening my resolve.

According to the plan for that day, we were supposed to move to another location after the dawn prayer. At that time, this group that was with us numbered approximately more than thirty. The Sheikh asked most of the brothers to move and said to me: 'I, you, and some of the brothers will remain here.'

I said: 'No, Sheikh, let us move, God willing. Movement helps a person forget grief.'

He said to me: 'No, no, no — do not worry.'

The Sheikh insisted, and we remained in that place for one day — may God reward him well — as he was keen for my nerves to calm and for my emotions to settle, and then we would move. After that, the initial shock passed. [‘al-Nāzi‘āt].

³ Zaman was killed by the Taliban, and as for Hazrat Ali, he survived assassination more than once. [Al-Nāzi‘āt].

⁴ Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri stated in *Days with the Imam*: "The relationship of the heroic commander, Instructor [Muallim] Awal Gul, with Bin Laden was a long-standing one dating back to the days of the Jihad. Instructor Awal Gul was also a neighbor of Bin Laden and his brothers in Jalalabad, where he lived with them in the village of 'Najm al-Jihad,' which was founded by Sheikh Muhammad Yunis Khalis and his fellow Mujahideen in Jalalabad. Sheikh Osama visited him frequently and maintained close ties with him. Even when Osama left Jalalabad and moved to Kandahar, he would inevitably visit Instructor Awal Gul during his trips to Jalalabad...

He took noble, heroic stands in Tora Bora. When the Americans and the hypocrites entered Jalalabad, they imagined that Instructor Awal Gul's stance might not be hostile toward them, at least in the initial phase.

B-52 planes continued to strike us by day and F-16 planes by night; the former were bombing back and forth on the sides of the mountains, and the youth were running from one side to the other to avoid the bombs.

Therefore, they did not remove him from his command of the tank brigade in Jalalabad. So, Instructor Awal Gul sent a message to Osama bin Laden, telling him: 'I am at your command. Either order me to leave this post and this responsibility, migrate, and leave Afghanistan, or order me to remain in this responsibility to be your eyes and your aid, supplying you with news and the latest developments as they happen.'

Indeed, he would send Bin Laden updates on events as they occurred—what the hypocrites were plotting, what they were meeting about, what they said, what they prepared, and their stance regarding the brothers in Tora Bora. He sent him news and developments constantly... He also told Osama: 'I am ready to gather the elite Mujahideen in Afghanistan for you. They are ready and only need a little support to be prepared if the Americans enter, and I am ready for that'...

When orders were issued for Instructor Awal Gul to move his brigade to participate in the siege of Tora Bora, he sent a message to Bin Laden seeking his counsel. He asked: 'What do you think I should do? Should I abandon this post, migrate, and leave Afghanistan? Or should I move with my brigade to the siege of Tora Bora, but I pledge to you that I will aim all my shells at empty mountains, far away from the Mujahideen's positions?'

Another brother and I were overcome with zeal, asking how he could agree to be among the apostate forces when he is a Mujahid. Sheikh Osama replied: 'Brothers, a man who is our supporter and beloved, firing his shells into empty mountains away from us, is better than another devil coming who would aim his cannons at us and shell us directly.'

So he sent word to Instructor Awal Gul saying: 'Do it' [Khayran], meaning proceed and trust in God. Indeed, the shells from the Instructor's tanks never hit us; we used to see them crashing into the mountains around us... The Sheikh always spoke well of him and prayed that Allah would reward him greatly for these noble stances... One of the messengers came to us once and said that Instructor Awal Gul would lock his door, weep, and say: 'What can I do for Sheikh Osama and his brothers?!' This brother would then comfort him...

[The Americans] claimed that he died in Guantanamo prison of a heart attack. I doubt this claim strictly. I believe they killed him, sought to kill him, or caused his death in revenge for this heroic stance—though I do not know if they knew about it or not, but at the very least, they knew the Instructor's history." — Edited/Abridged.

Fayiz al-Kandari said: "[Instructor Gul] told me about the Americans torturing him in the Kabul and Bagram prisons in order to extract information about the number one wanted fugitive. He then said angrily: 'They demand that we hand over the one who sacrificed everything he owned for our sake, while their soldiers spread death across our homeland only to return to their own countries safe and sound!'... His health was good at the beginning of his captivity, but they subjected him to various forms of psychological pressure until his heart health was affected. One of the detained doctors was shocked when he saw the medications they were giving him; he told him that they were very dangerous for the heart and that the Americans wanted to kill him by administering high doses. However, his advice came too late." See: *The Severe Tribulation and the New Birth [Al-Balaa' al-Shadid wa al-Milad al-Jadid]* (pp. 397–400). [‘al-Nāzi‘āt].

A chip in Bin Laden's trench

The place where we were had a trench measuring approximately (3 × 2 meters), which was used by my father together with Abu al-Ghaith and Dr. Ayman.

A number of people from the local area came to us claiming they wanted to meet my father and greet him.⁵ After they left, my father asked us to leave the place and climb higher up the mountain, where we spent the night. Not long afterward, aircraft arrived and bombed the first location that we had departed.

My father then sent someone to reconnoiter the result of the bombing. The scout returned and said that the aircraft had dropped a seven-ton bomb, creating a massive crater in the mountain. The strike was a direct hit on my father's trench, and there was a person sleeping in it.⁶

⁵ However, they secretly planted an electronic chip to guide the aircraft to the location. [Mustafa Hamid].

⁶ Fayiz al-Kandari said in *al-Balā' al-Shadīd wa-l-Milād al-Jadīd*:

"On our way, we saw one of the brothers standing and contemplating a huge crater from which tongues of flame were rising.

My companion said, pointing to it: 'Do you know whose trench this is?'

'And who could it be?'

He told me something that astonished me. He said: 'In this trench, specifically, there had been Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, with them a Yemeni man close to bin Laden. Bin Laden saw a vision warning him against remaining in the trench, so they changed their location. On the night they moved away from the trench, the American aircraft did not drop a single munition—it was a strange night in its calm. Then a lone aircraft came and dropped a single bomb. That was close to midnight. It fell on this trench specifically and turned it into embers!'

It appears that the Afghan negotiating delegation was able to determine its location and placed a chip there.'

'So no one was killed?'

'On the contrary—Osama was killed!'

'Who? How? I understood nothing.'

'On the following night, a Yemeni young man came and spent the night in the trench after learning that it was empty. His nom de guerre was Osama al-Adani. Strangely, the kunya of the killed man matched the name of the intended target. I myself heard the American channels on the radio announce the next day that it was likely that Osama bin Laden had been eliminated... truly strange!'

'And the young man?'

'His body was torn to pieces.'

'I was shocked when I heard the kunya. I remembered his supplication when he said: "O God, gather me from the bellies of beasts and the crops of birds." We had not gone far from the place when I saw crows gathering

On (27 Ramadan / 16 December): two days earlier, news reached us over the main radio communications of the martyrdom of Abu Hafs al-Masri⁷

On that day, my father asked me to leave this area along with my brother. I refused and said to him, "Let my brother go, but I will stay with you." My father insisted that I leave as well, then he left for a while.

When he returned, he said: "The three of you will leave; you, Dr. Ayman, and Abu al-Ghaith." So, we were to go to a place unknown to us and wait for our father there.

At 'Asr (afternoon prayer), the three of us prepared to depart, accompanied by an Afghan guide. My father came to see me off; he embraced me and kissed my head. I was shocked because this was not his habit, and I was the only one among my siblings whose father kissed his head. For several days in Logar⁸ I had been his personal servant and carrier of his belongings.

Tora Bora Mountain was besieged by forces from Jalalabad. In the darkness, we descended to the Afghan side of the mountain, which belonged to the Waziri tribe. Members of that tribe escorted us to their village.

While descending toward the village, we were nearly discovered by the men of Ahmad Shah Massoud. They had a guard post, and the lights of their vehicle almost fell on us, so we quickly prostrated ourselves on the ground. My legs had been injured since we were on the mountain. We resumed moving, and while crossing a stream over the

over something strange. I approached it and found them to be the remains of Osama al-Adani. We began examining his scattered remains and found his spine among torn flesh. We buried it there, on the green summit. The aircraft were flying densely overhead as we dug, hiding under the branches of the trees. We left the place to the crows and the eagles as they fulfilled Osama's wish." (pp. 65–66).

For further detail on the Battle of Tora Bora and its events, see pp. 42–88 of the same work, which contains material not found elsewhere. [ʿal-Nāziʿāt].

⁷ That is, after approximately one month, as Abu Hafs was killed on 13 November. [Mustafa Hamid].

⁸ in Mays 'Aynak on the Eve of September 11. [Mustafa Hamid]

stones blocking it, Dr. Ayman's glasses fell, and we were unable to find them in the dark.

Finally, we arrived at the safe house that the tribe had prepared for us, and we slept there for one night.

In the morning (17 Kanun al-Awwal / December), they brought us a pickup truck, which took us through the outskirts of Jalalabad and then veered directly toward Kunar Province along a rough road. Eventually, we arrived in Asadabad, the provincial capital, and hid in a safe house.

Eid al-Fitr (19 Kanun al-Awwal / December): shortly before dawn, a young Afghan man burst in and said excitedly, "Osama has arrived." Moments later, my father entered. We prostrated ourselves to God in gratitude and said to him: "We have two Eids in one day—Eid al-Fitr and the Eid of your safe arrival to us."

The one who brought my father to us was al-Mu'allim Awwal Gul, who transported him in his vehicle—a white Land Cruiser with black-tinted windows—to the border of Kunar Province. There, the young men received him and brought him to us.

My father remained with us in the same safe house. We were in the depths of winter, to the point that we came to hate the snow, as we were unable to light a fire so as not to draw people's attention to the presence of anyone in that house.

Hekmatyar Arrives

After approximately three months (March 2002), Hekmatyar arrived to us with the help of Khalid Sheikh and his group in Pakistan. Khalid was a liaison between my father and everyone connected to him in Pakistan. Hekmatyar moved to live alone in an isolated house. He would come to us and hold private conversations with my father, with Dr. Ayman, and with Abu al-Ghaith.

We would sit at a distance from them, but we sensed tension between them and a back-and-forth struggle. Then Hekmatyar withdrew from us, isolating himself in his secluded house. My father would send Abu al-Ghaith to speak with him, and he would return to us stunned by the severity of what Hekmatyar had confronted him with in his words.

During one of his visits to us at our safe house, Hekmatyar erupted at my father, saying:

“I am the emir here, not you—so do not think yourself in Kandahar.”⁹

Hekmatyar made a habit of coming to the courtyard of our safe house and then beginning to speak on a Thuraya satellite phone. My father asked him not to do that, because it exposed them to danger, but Hekmatyar refused and acted arrogantly.

Despite the strained relationship, Hekmatyar once came carrying a gift for my father. It was a watch, which he placed on a table in the middle of the room. My father said to him, “No, we do not want this.” Hekmatyar took the watch back, and he continued to come to us from time to time.¹⁰

⁹ The tension was increasing and trust eroding, until doubts and suspicion appeared in Hekmatyar’s behavior, especially that he showed disregard for the presence of bin Lādin and his security precautions, and his behavior appeared intentional. Perhaps bin Lādin remembered at that time the saying of Mawlawi Yunus Khalis—when we were with bin Lādin as guests at his home in Jalalabad in 1996—when he wanted to summarize his long experience with Hekmatyar, the man said spontaneously: “He is like a mule, if you walk in front of him he bites you, and if you walk behind him he kicks you.” In that critical journey in 2001, bin Lādin suffered from Hekmatyar, sometimes with biting and sometimes with kicking. Bin Lādin in the final months had acquired the intuition of suspicion which proved true many times. [Mustafa Hamid].

¹⁰ It is clear that bin Lādin’s intuition was saying that inside that watch was a calamity the extent of which only Allāh knew. [Mustafa Hamid]

Top Secret

While we were in the mountains, Khalid Sheikh sent us a computer with a compact disc labeled: “Top Secret.”

My father said: “Strange! You should not look—only I will look at it.”

It turned out to be the program by the journalist Yosri Fouda entitled “Top Secret.” We watched the video, and for the first time we saw images of the imprisoned brothers in Guantánamo.

Hamza al-Ghamdi departed to travel, at my father’s request. Those who remained with my father were myself, my brother, Abu al-Ghaith, Dr. Ayman, and Abu Basir. We divided the tasks of daily living and food preparation. My brother and I worked a single shift together throughout the day, and at night—so that no one would see us—we would descend to the valley to fetch water in two containers. On the way back up, the water would spill over our bodies in the intense cold of the night.

We prepared food three times a day. One day we prepared for breakfast ma’soobah, a Saudi dish consisting of dough with honey and clarified butter in the middle. Dr. Ayman refused to eat and said, “This is not from the food of my people.” At lunch, we found some pieces of squash and potatoes and made a soup from them, which greatly pleased my father.

Everyone who had been with us departed, and only three of us remained: myself, my father, and Dr. Ayman. My father feared that one of those who left might be captured and lead the enemy to the location of the house.¹¹

¹¹ There is no doubt that bin Lādin also had suspicions regarding Hekmatyar and that he was trying to entrap him into the hands of the enemy, and this is what subsequent events confirmed. [Mustafa Hamid].

We walked a long distance away from the place and hid with another group. Before long, Hekmatyar caught up with us and said: “The aircraft have burned the area where you were staying.”

Hekmatyar took up residence in a house on the summit of a mountain opposite us, and his visits to us were infrequent.

One morning, he left his house heading toward Pakistan through the mountains. One of the Afghans told us that the Americans had attacked the mountain where he had been staying.

Bitter Honey

The three of us were living in a single room on the mountain. Some tension arose between Dr. Ayman and my father because my father had purchased Pakistani sidr honey. Dr. Ayman became angry and said to him: “It is not permissible to buy honey with the funds of the mujahideen.”

My father replied: “Come—by God’s grace, from the day I began jihad until now, I have not spent anything on myself or my children from the funds of the mujahideen. This honey I purchased with my own money, not with the mujahideen’s money.” Dr. Ayman fell silent and did not respond.

We remained in this situation for a period of time. Then one day, a stranger arrived at the house and introduced himself to the others as Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti, and he slept on the upper floor of the house, waiting to meet my father.

My father asked me to meet with him and verify his identity. I went and confirmed that he was indeed Abu Ahmad. I informed my father, and he hastened to meet him immediately.

The Dream of Stability Evaporated

Now the situation had changed, and the Americans had expanded widely on the ground. My father decided that we would remain in our current hideout and considered something resembling future settlement in that area.

Indeed, he discussed with our Afghan hosts a proposal that they build a house for us in Kunar, and he provided them with a drawing of the house. This was the same design that was later adopted in the construction of the Abbottabad house, relying on visual deception.

He then provided them with financial support to work against the occupation, and they later became active in resisting the Americans. They were unwilling for us to leave them, so my father appeased them with money to allow us to depart, and he pledged to them that he would build a house for them near the Haram in Mecca when Afghanistan was liberated and Saudi Arabia was liberated. He placed his hand upon theirs to seal that pledge.

Around that time, Muhammad Fahim—the liaison element with “al-Qaeda”—came to us with news from Jalalabad. My father gave him fifty thousand dollars to finance resistance activities against the occupation and specified certain targets; a number of them were indeed carried out. When my father heard of one of them—which was an important target—he prostrated to God in thanks, as it was revenge for part of the suffering of the Arabs in Jalalabad. Fahim, however, was soon killed as well.

The dream of building a house in the mountains of Kunar and settling there quickly evaporated, as the Americans reached our area. The warning came to us when an Afghan burst in, wide-eyed, hurling curses into the radio in his hand. The man told us breathlessly that the Americans were moving through the valley below the mountain where we were hiding, and that their equipment was pouring in heavily.

The situation was extremely difficult.

At maximum speed, we put on our shoes, carried our weapons, and climbed to the top of the mountain, racing against time, until we were out of breath, even though the snow was no longer present.

We heard the sounds of American Humvee vehicles and saw them passing below us in the valley. We sat behind a tree until the convoy passed, then continued climbing. My father ordered us not to open fire on the enemy unless they fired upon us first. Dr. Ayman said: "I will not enter prison again."

We continued climbing, concealed by the folds of the mountain. Friends from the local population searched for a place for us to hide and found a massive tree whose roots formed arches with the surface of the ground, creating—roots and earth together—something like a trench that could fit one person lying stretched out beneath it.

My father and Dr. Ayman entered, and I slept beneath their feet. Our Afghan escort covered us with grass to camouflage the place. The aircraft did not come, but infantry soldiers and their vehicles filled the valley and were standing directly beneath the mountain where we were.

We remained for two days in this state, hidden in this foxhole, from morning until after sunset, without food, drink, or relieving ourselves.

I filmed my father as he emerged from the camouflaged opening, and the footage exists at the al-Sahab Media Foundation.

After the danger passed, the Afghans informed us that the enemy had gone and that the area had become safe again. We began descending the mountain, which took from mid-morning until near noon.

I filmed my father and Dr. Ayman descending that mountain, and the image spread globally as though it were from Tora Bora.

Immediately, we began climbing the opposing mountain, behind whose other slope lies Pakistan. We continued climbing without interruption until near dawn. The summit was terrifying and extremely high, to the extent that during the ascent we entered the clouds, soaking our beards and clothes. We had one or two Afghans with us, and the food was extremely scarce.

We passed by a village located in the final third of the mountain, avoided it, and continued climbing until we reached the very summit. We were all exhausted, and my father said: "We will rest a little, then continue walking." We prepared a place beneath the trees to lie down.

All of those incidents were recorded on the camera I had with me, and during rain I would hide it beneath me or inside my clothes.

Ten minutes after beginning our rest, heavy rain poured down on us, and we were so exhausted that we were unable to rise from our place. I hid the camera beneath me so it would not be damaged.

At dawn the rain eased, and we continued walking until sunrise. Our Afghan escorts reassured us, saying that arrival was near.

The Pakistan Phase

A completely new phase had just begun. We were standing on the Pakistani side of the mountain, exhausted by hunger and thirst.

We found a rock on the side of the narrow mountain path, convex in shape so that it retained water inside it. We drank and continued walking.

Our march lasted an entire day, during which we rested for only half an hour. Near noon we reached a house to rest and hide. They put us in a room that had been designated for children and was still filled with their pungent smells.

In that place we were waiting for Mukhtar (Khalid Sheikh).

We were still on the mountain, with the vehicle road a half-hour walk away from us.

Our Afghan escorts were tense and said that the Americans were present below the mountain along with Afghan traitors, advising us not to descend. My father asked me to go down to scout the road, accompanied by one Afghan, and he provided me with an agreed-upon signal in case something happened and I was arrested.

I went down and found nothing of what they had said. My father and Dr. Ayman then descended from the mountain, and Mukhtar was waiting, driving a Pajero vehicle.

We entered the city of Peshawar during the daytime and stayed in one of the houses for a day or two, until my stepmother and her daughter arrived.

My father came to me—after that arduous journey had ended—and said to me: “The time has come for you to go and get married.” I resisted, so he addressed me in the Sudanese dialect, saying: “Ya zol... ya zol... we want to see your children, ya zol.”

I agreed. Then the brothers came to accompany me, and my father gave me five thousand dollars and said: “This is to help you with the matters of marriage.”

Thus began my journey away from my father. Prior to that, a decision had been made to separate my father from Dr. Ayman into two different groups, for security reasons.¹²

¹² The young man proceeds, after leaving his father Osama bin Laden, to continue narrating his story, beginning the journey from Peshawar to Lahore, then Rawalpindi, then Karachi, then Quetta... and finally Iran, where arrest, imprisonment, and many harsh and painful events occurred—until he brings us back once again to his father in Abbottabad, describing the crime committed there by the Americans. He related it as he heard it from family members who endured it. [Mustafa Hamid]

This Is Abdullah

Abbottabad: The End of the Journey

(Dawn of 2 May 2011)

On that night, the father—Osama bin Laden—was staying on the third floor of a three-story house with a garden containing a guard's quarters. Before dawn, he heard strange sounds coming from the lower floor, so he asked his son Khalid to go down and see what was happening, but Khalid did not return to him again.

The sounds that alarmed bin Laden were caused by an attack by U.S. special forces on the house. They carried out an insertion using two helicopters, and the soldiers attacked from both the top and the bottom of the house. The aircraft were also special and did not produce sound while flying. The weapons used were fitted with suppressors; therefore, the operation was largely silent and did not draw anyone's attention. The only sound heard by the household and the surrounding area was the explosion of one of the two attacking helicopters while the operation was still underway inside the house, or near its end. The operation took a short time.

When Khalid went down to the lower floor, the attackers opened fire on him and killed him immediately. They then went up to the third floor, entered it, and opened fire on the father at once, causing him to fall to the ground.

Bin Laden was not carrying a weapon at that time.

The wife grabbed the attacking soldier's weapon and struggled with him. He struck her and threw her to the ground, then shot her, wounding her knee; to this day she is unable to bend it.

The soldiers gathered the women and children into one room, placing their faces toward the wall and binding their hands behind their backs. They then brought the father's body and laid it behind them, ordered them to turn and look at it, and asked them: "Who is this?" They replied: "This is Abdullah." ¹³

They then ordered them to face the wall again. After that, they took the body and left, leaving Khalid's body where it was.

The Pakistanis arrived and took the women and children away with them. Khalid's mother, before leaving, bent over her son's body and kissed him on the forehead... then departed.

In the courtyard of the house there was an annex in which the guard and his family lived—consisting of a wife and two children—and with them that night was a visiting relative. That guard was Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti himself. The attackers killed all of them and left no one alive.

They then departed in their remaining aircraft... and the place fell silent, saturated with the smell of death and blood.

¹³ This is how it appears in the original; perhaps it should be: Abu 'Abdullah, the kunya of sheikh bin Laden [Al-Nazi'at]